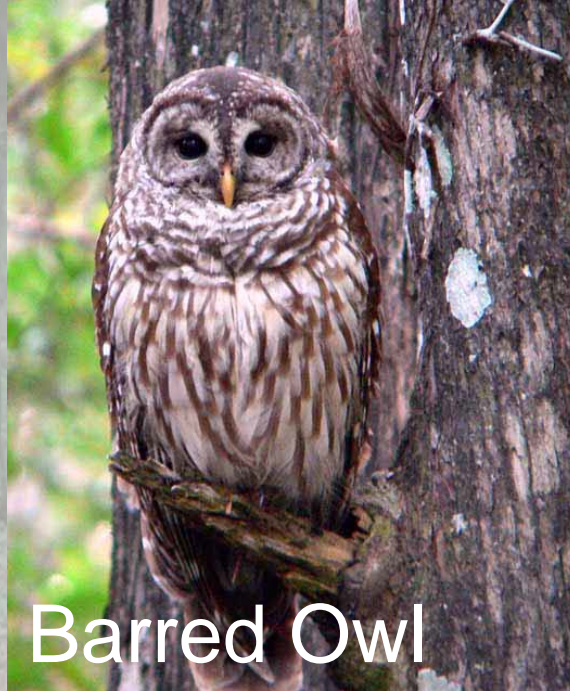


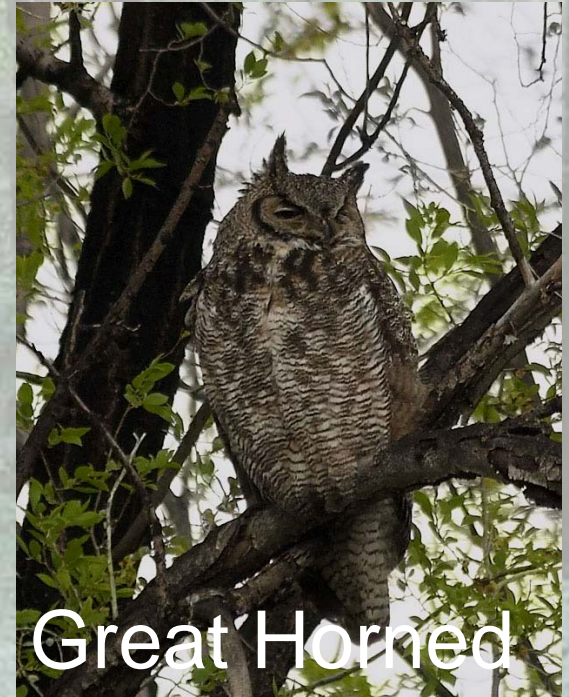
# Owls of Nebraska



Barn Owl



Barred Owl



Great Horned





# Owls are Raptors...

## So, what are raptors?

“Raptor” is Latin for “to grasp or crush.”

All raptors have several characteristics which include:

- Eat meat (mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, etc.)
- Sharp talons
- Sharp, hooked beak
- Powerful vision



**Bald Eagle**

# What makes an owl and owl... and not a hawk?

Owls have several characteristics that make them different from other raptors.

- Owls are nocturnal.
- Cone shaped eyes.
- More rods than cones in their eyes (so they see in black and white).
- More acute sense of hearing.
- All owls have a reversible 4<sup>th</sup> toe (osprey also have this ability).



# Nebraska is home to 12 owl species.

Some are common, some occasional visitors, and some are accidental visitors.

Some are found only in the west, some only in the east, and still others are found statewide.



# Barn Owl

*Tyto alba*



- Disk or heart shaped face ~ funnels the sound and light to their ears and eyes.
- Live only 3~5 years.
- Habitat: open to semi-open habitats where small rodents are plentiful.
- Range: Uncommon permanent resident and breeder across the state.



# Barred Owl

*Strix varia*



- A chunky owl, more rounded in shape. Dark barring on upper chest, streaking below.
- Habitat: dense coniferous or mixed woods.
- Range: Uncommon permanent resident and breeder in eastern Nebraska.
- One of the only owl species with dark brown eyes.



# Boreal Owl

*Aegolius funereus*

- Small chubby owl. Flat head with brown and white streaks.
- Habitat: dense coniferous forests, typically at higher elevations.
- Range: Accidental; last record in Nebraska in 1963.
- Feeds mainly on small mammals, supplemented with birds and insects.





# Burrowing Owl

## *Athene cunicularia*



- Small owl with long legs. Brown with bold white spots.
- Habitat: Typically found in open country, especially areas with prairie dogs.
- Range: fairly common in western Nebraska.
- Feeds mainly on grasshoppers, beetles, ground insects and small mammals.



# Eastern Screech Owl

*Otus asio*



- Small owl with bars and streaks on chest. Two color phases – red and grey.



Habitat: Variety of wooded areas, farmyards, and cities.

Range: Common across the state.

Feeds mainly on grasshoppers, beetles, ground insects and small mammals.



# Great Grey Owl

*Strix nebulosa*



- Large owl with big facial disks. Vertical striping below chest. Long tail.
- Habitat: Usually found in boreal forests and wooded bogs. Generally found in the far north.
- Range: Accidental.
- Feeds on rodents.
- Largest owl in North America.



# Great Horned Owl

*Bubo virginianus*

- Large owl with distinctive ear-tuffs. Mottled grey-brown chest, horizontal barring below.
- Habitat: Highly adaptable; from forests to urban areas.



- Range: Uncommon permanent resident across the state.
- Call is the “typical” owl call – hoo, hoo~hoo~hoo.



# Long-eared Owl

*Asio otus*

- Large slender owl with close-set ear tufts. Vertical chest markings. Rust colored face.
- Habitat: Found in a variety of wooded areas – forests, orchards, woodlots.
- Range: Uncommon permanent resident in the state. Rarer to the west. .
- Relies heavily on rodents.





# Northern Hawk Owl

*Surnia ulula*



© Scott W. Coalter

- Mid-sized owl with a long tail. Brown overall with white spots on top, barring on under parts.
- Habitat: Boreal and tundra forest – Predominately far north of Nebraska.
- Range: Accidental.
- The most diurnal of all North American owls.



# Northern Saw-whet Owl

*Aegolius acadicus*

- Small owl Reddish-brown above, white stomach. Short tail and dark bill.
- Habitat: Usually found in dense woodlands.
- Range: Uncommon to rare. No breeding records in the state.
- Eat predominately small mice, although may eat some insects.





# Short-eared Owl

*Asio flammeus*



- Mid-sized owl with tiny ear-tuffs. Tawny brown colored with pale belly.
- Habitat: Open, grassland areas especially in the Sandhills.
- Range: Common perminate resident in Nebraska.
- A vole or field mouse specialist~almost the entire diet is made up of these small rodents.



# Snowy Owl

*Nyctea scandiaca*



- Large owl. Almost entirely white; some grey spotting.
- Habitat: Open fields and grassy lowlands.
- Range: Occasional visitor; typically in winter.
- Typically eats voles and lemmings although it can take ducks, hares, and geese.